IT Council
Technology Services Committee
State of California Open Source Working Group

Charter

Name	Lead	Request Date	Sponsor	Working Group Membership
Open Source Working Group (OSWG)	Technology Services Committee	9/30/2005	Clark Kelso, State CIO	1. State CIO 2. Information Officers 3. Technical staff

Mission:

It is the mission of the OS Working Group to identify and assess best value opportunities offered by open source software and to educate IT professionals on trends, benefits as well as the risks associated with open source solutions.

Background:

As the California 2004 California Performance Review presented: "Each year the State of California spends millions of dollars on software, software maintenance and renewal. Many private and governmental organizations are turning to open source software as a cost-effective alternative to closed source software. Closed source software is any software whose source code is hidden from the public view. Under most licenses the user cannot modify the program or redistribute it. Closed source products encompass the spectrum from server operating systems, application development platforms, office productivity suites, to small yet often expensive utilities. Each of these software solutions has an initial investment cost, maintenance and/or upgrade costs.

Organizations are now starting to embrace open source solutions as a cost-effective alternative to these closed source products. Open source solutions differ from closed source in many ways, one of which is cost. Open source solutions are typically free of charge, although some companies such as IBM, Oracle and Hewlett Packard (HP) often sell versions of open source software with related maintenance.

Open source software is developed with the source code freely available; anyone can use the software, and make changes to it as necessary. Typically changes are then made available back to the open source community using a common methodology for change control. In contrast to open source, most software development companies sell their products at a specific cost, but do not allow the user to see or modify the source code.

The advent and acceptance of open source software represents a significant shift in the software development and procurement cycle. It is sometimes difficult to think of downloading a free version of software from the Internet and then using it in a mission-critical environment rather than buying software from a major software vendor. There are arguments to be made that open source can be a better choice for some mission-critical implementations than closed source."

The Open Source Working Group is a non-policy committee formed to identify and assess those open source solutions representing best value opportunities in terms of increasing system performance, reliability and lowering state IT costs.